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DECEMBER 12, 2025 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 26

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From the archives: The legend lives on at Downtown Home and Garden. **page 14**

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GROUNDCOVER 15

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP | WASHTENAW COUNTY, MICH.

Memories of the deep north.

page 6

THIS PAPER WAS BOUGHT FROM

venmo

@groundcovernews, include vendor name and vendor #

GROUNDCOVER NEWS

PROVIDING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-DETERMINED INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED BY POVERTY,
PRODUCING A STREET NEWSPAPER THAT GIVES A PLATFORM TO UNDERREPRESENTED VOICES IN WASHTENAW COUNTY,
PROMOTING AN ACTION TO BUILD A JUST, CARING AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETY.

Groundcover News, a 501(c)(3) organization, was founded in April 2010 as a means to empower low-income persons to make the transitions from homeless to housed, and from jobless to employed.

Vendors purchase each copy of our regular editions of Groundcover News at our office for 50 cents. This money goes towards production costs. Vendors work selling the paper on the street for $2, keeping all income and tips from each sale. Vendors are the main contributors to the paper, and are compensated to write and report.

Street papers like Groundcover News exist in cities all over the United States, as well as in more than 40 other countries, in an effort to raise awareness of the plight of homeless people and combat the increase in poverty. Our paper is a proud member of the International Network of Street Papers.

International Network of Street Papers

SUNDAY
MONDAY
TUESDAY
WEDNESDAY
THURSDAY
FRIDAY
SATURDAY
2026 CALENDARS
OUT NOW!
This wall calendar, filled with vendor photography, is being sold by Groundcover vendors during the holiday season for a chance to make extra money when its needed most. Get one today — for yourself or a loved one — from your favorite vendor.
ONLY $10
MOTHER'S DAY
MEMORIAL DAY

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WAYS TO SUPPORT

1. **Buy the paper, read the paper.**
2. **Get the word out** — We rely on grassroots marketing. Talk to people about Groundcover and share us with your network.
3. **Volunteer** — You'll learn a lot about our vendors, the newspaper and your community. Interested in volunteering regularly? Fill out the form on our website.
4. **Advertise** your company, organization, event or resource — see rates below.
5. **Follow us on Facebook and Instagram** — promote our posts and share your favorite articles and vendor interactions.
6. **Donate items** — A seasonally appropriate list of items most needed at our office and on the street is available on our website. Drop off anytime we're open.

GROUNDCOVER NEWS ADVERTISING RATES

Size	Black/White	Color	Dimensions (W x H in inches)
1/8	$110.00	$150.00	5 X 3 or 2.5 X 6.5
1/6	$145.00	$200.00	5 X 4
1/4	$200.00	$265.00	5 X 6.25
1/2	$375.00	$500.00	5 X 13 or 10.25 X 6.5
full page	$650.00	$900.00	10.25 X 13

PACKAGE PRICING

Three Months/Six Issues: **15%** off
Six Months/Twelve Issues: **25%** off
Full Year/Twenty-four Issues: **35%** off
Only run for two weeks/one issue: **40%** off
Additional **20%** discount for money saving coupons

MEET YOUR VENDOR

Denise Shearer, vendor No. 485

In one sentence, who are you?
I love myself and my friends and family.

Where do you usually sell Groundcover?
Each time I sell I pick a spot on Liberty Street in downtown Ann Arbor.

When and why did you start selling Groundcover?
I started selling in 2019 because I wanted to help and support myself, and make new friends.

If you could do anything for a day, what would it be?
I would go to Frankenmuth!

If you had to eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?
I would eat BBQ hamburgers and hot dogs with plain iced black tea.

What is your superpower?
Seeing the good in everybody.

What was your first job?
A shampoo lady at a beauty shop in Ferndale. I think I was 24 years old.

What are your hobbies? How did you get into them?
My hobby is making artwork. I have been doing it since I was a kid and still like doing it.

What change would you like to see in Washtenaw County?
That low-income and poor people get treated better. And! People with special needs are treated better too.

What would be the first thing you'd do if you won the lottery?
I would buy a house. It would be a tiny dream home.

What would YOU ask?

If you have a question or issue you would like Groundcover vendors to discuss, email us at contact@groundcovernews.com

We will be featuring vendor responses in future issues.

Public debate?!

MIKE JONES
Groundcover vendor No. 113

Speakers Corner in Hyde Park in London, England, is a famous public debate space and the world's oldest free speech platform. And I love it! I watch it every so often on Youtube.

There is a saying I've heard: one must be under the hypnosis (that is, believe wholeheartedly in hypnosis) in order to hypnotize others. It makes me smile to see people who feel so passionate about their beliefs.

The origins of Speakers Corner can be traced back to the Reform League riots of 1866 or the last speeches of the condemned at the Tyburn gallows. The space was originally a public place for executions, including the notorious Tyburn hanging tree.

In 1872, the Royal and Garden Regulation Act was passed, allowing people to speak freely in a designated area of Hyde Park without police permission. The Reform League played a big part in passing this act.

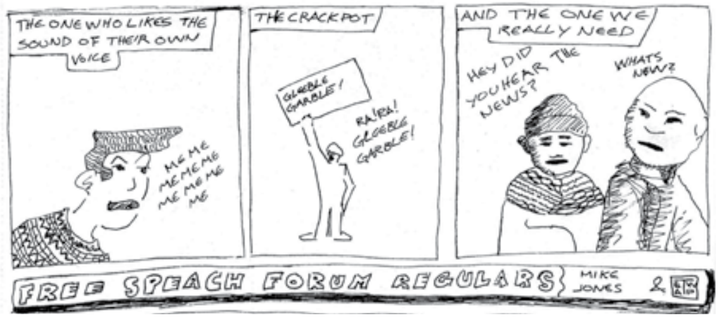
Historic figures such as Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, William Morris and George Orwell spoke at Speakers Corner, and Orwell described it as "one of the minor wonders of the world."

Speakers Corner is known for its tense face-to-face cultural and religious arguments that make it so unique.

American society is missing this element in its character. I feel we need to use our voices and be more passionate when expressing the way we feel. In the UK there is a religious and racial divide; whereas people in the United States are also racially divided, but we are more likely to want to debate about politics. I would like to see more debate spaces in our society where people can voice their opinions and differences without violence.

Speakers Corner has a gang of notables like a Muslim woman turned Christian, Hatun Tash, and a funny Christian man named Orlando who is my favorite. In summary, Muslims and Christians have at it! Public debate style.

Let's talk about it!


THE ONE WHO LIKES THE SOUND OF THEIR OWN VOICE
ME ME ME ME ME ME ME
THE CRACKPOT
GOBBLE GOBBLE!
RAVEN! GOBBLE GOBBLE!
AND THE ONE WE REALLY NEED
HEY DID YOU HEAR THE NEWS?
WHAT'S NEWZ
FREE SPEACH FORUM REGULARS
MIKE JONES

Good wintertime foods on a budget

DENISE SHEARER
Groundcover vendor No. 485

There are a lot of delicious wintertime foods that soothe and comfort and do your body good in the winter. I'm going to talk about three casseroles that are delicious. One is tuna noodle casserole made of cream of mushroom soup, tuna, cooked macaroni, a little bit of salt and pepper (if you want it), and cheese from the macaroni package, mixed together. It's called a tuna noodle macaroni and cheese casserole. You can eat it hot or cold. It is so comforting and soothing to eat.

Another is a ham salad noodle casserole. Combine ham, cooked macaroni noodles, mustard, mayonnaise, salt and pepper (if you want it), and pickle relish. Eat it hot or cold, it is very delicious! It is also soothing and comforting to your body.

Another delicious comforting casserole is turkey, stuffing, gravy and ham together. Mix stuffing, cream of mushroom soup, gravy, turkey and ham. You can eat it cold or warmed up. It is delicious and comforting to your body and it makes you feel warm and good.

Those are the three comforting casseroles that are really good in the winter.

Left to right: Marius Johnson, Felicia Wilbert, Cindy Gere and David Putman.

Groundcover annual open mic extravaganza

STEVEN
Groundcover vendor No. 668

I was inspired to write this story while I was in the glow of having just ended emceeing the Fourth Annual Groundcover Open Mic. I've never emceed anything. I had no idea how to emcee but in the moment it struck me as a fun idea. Soon after getting the enthusiastic approval of "people" about this thing, I panicked. I guess I was in. It was fun. It was epic and I'm proud to have been part of it.

I'm over here watching videos about emceeing, figuring out how one might write about a cool thing like this. I panicked. Did I mention I panicked? I wished dearly I could tell the boss I had changed my mind. I could have. 100% I could have. But not and still be cool with myself, a stretch on the best days.

The boss would have for sure let me off the hook. I don't like being that guy. I have been and will be a guy who ducks out, but not this time. I followed through.

Bang howdy I'm glad I did it. I suspect this event would be better served by a better event reporter, but I was there. I was engaged in a way different than usual. I'm glad I leaned into this because this is the Beat Generation I was looking for.

Here's the list of performers: Panda, Wayne, Ken, Marius, Amanda, Ty, David, Joshua, Victor, Dylan The Autistic Spitfire, Ameera and Anna.

Okay, my journalism part is fulfilled. Here's my take: Holy shit we need more of all of this. As a species, as a culture, storytelling and listening are intrinsic to us but it's satiated by screens. I love screens, this isn't hate, it's love for interpersonal events.

Every. Single. Person. Who got on that mic crushed it. I've been to open mics. Usually there are people who I might have preferred if they hadn't got up. Not this night. The worst thing I can say is the emcee was underprepared, and awkward, but had a certain charm. The people who ponied up and put themselves out there crushed it.

The show ran the gamut. We had fantastic indigenous folk music, original songs, well-written, and professionally-performed. We had a standup comic who had my and others' asses rolling in the aisles. We had interpretive readings, we had interpretive dance, we had spirituals, we had pop-art, we had (a highlight for me) "an old guy saying stuff." We, as a culture, need more of that.

There were people who I suspect saw open mic and went for it, and got it. This one guy sang and played at a professional level like Elliot Smith. A beautiful, great, encouraging crowd.

There are a few of us who thought we must have shat the bed, but on every account from everyone who wasn't them, they didn't. I rediscovered my love of the ukulele, manic ramblings, and the disjointed truth of people.

At its heart, and this event was very much bolstered by heart (thank you boss), this was a space for creative expression. This space very easily could have been a coffee shop in The Village of 50s New York. It was safe and public. A space where our underserved, underrepresented, the groundside, could just be, and mingle with the square public and both have good things to get from it.

Panda and Amanda bookended the evening with beautiful songs, to set the beginning tone, and bring us home at the end. Several people were funny, but The Autistic Spitfire was side-splitting and not kitch, just funny.

Politics were espoused, social commentary, creative game design were all to be had. If any mainstream media tried to do this it would have been lost in the filth that is modern media. There were no pop-up ads. Well there was one. I as the emcee did, in fact, clumsily point out the whole idea of this thing was to give voice to and call attention to the unhoused and the hungry, in recognition of Homelessness and Hunger Awareness Week.

I'm very grateful to Groundcover News, its publisher Lindsay Calka (she'll hate this, heh heh), the people who keep it going by buying the papers, the maniac contributors, the wonderful art gallery event space, Makeshift Gallery (407 E Liberty St in Ann Arbor) and the people who braved the fear of putting themselves "out there." The people who showed up, money spent or not.

This was the fourth year of the Groundcover open mic and I hope it continues for years beyond our great time and space.

Peace.

Groundcover Vendor Code

While Groundcover is a non-profit, and paper vendors are self-employed contractors, we still have expectations of how vendors should conduct themselves while selling and representing the paper.

The following is our **Vendor Code of Conduct**, which every vendor reads and signs before receiving a badge and papers. We request that if you discover a vendor violating any tenets of the Code, please contact us and provide as many details as possible. Our paper and our vendors should be positively impacting our County.

- Groundcover will be distributed for a voluntary donation. I agree not to ask for more than the cover price or solicit donations by any other means.
- When selling Groundcover, I will always have the current biweekly issue of Groundcover available for customer purchase.
- I agree not to sell additional goods or products when selling the paper or to panhandle, including panhandling with only one paper or selling an issue more than 4 weeks old.
- I will wear and display my badge when selling papers and refrain from wearing it or other Groundcover gear when engaged in other activities.
- I will only purchase the paper from Groundcover Staff and will not sell to or buy papers from other Groundcover vendors, especially vendors who have been suspended or terminated.
- I agree to treat all customers, staff, and other vendors respectfully. I will not "hard sell," threaten, harass or pressure customers, staff, or other vendors verbally or physically.
- I will not sell Groundcover under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- I understand that I am not a legal employee of Groundcover but a contracted worker responsible for my own well-being and income.
- I understand that my badge is property of Groundcover and will not deface it. I will present my badge when purchasing the papers.
- I agree to stay off private property when selling Groundcover.
- I understand to refrain from selling on public buses, federal property or stores unless there is permission from the owner.
- I agree to stay at least one block away from another vendor in downtown areas. I will also abide by the Vendor Corner Policy.
- I understand that Groundcover strives to be a paper that covers topics of homelessness and poverty while providing sources of income for the homeless. I will try to help in this effort and spread the word.

If you would like to report a violation of the Vendor Code or leave positive review of a Vendor experience please email contact@groundcovernews.com or fill out the contact form on our website.

letter to the **EDITOR**

My name is Grace and I'm a resident in Ann Arbor. I just wanted to write to say that I really enjoyed Ken Parks' (Groundcover vendor no. 490) article titled "Gratitude" in the latest edition of Groundcover. I thought his insight was thought-provoking and his prose was beautiful. The way he tied together the meaning of life to optimism and community was deeply inspiring given today's world. I hope you will pass along my message to the author — I have "gratitude" for him sharing his profound writing and perspective!

Thank you and happy Thanksgiving,
Grace

community **EVENTS**

CHIME CONCERT: KERRYTOWN MARKET & SHOPS
Friday and Saturday, December 12-13, 12-12:30 p.m. (Fri), 10:30-11 a.m. (Sat), Kerrytown. *All are invited to play one of 200 songs, with melodies transcribed in numbers, on the 17-bell chime's numbered keys.*

TINY EXPO INDIE ART & CRAFT FAIR
Saturday, December 13, 11 a.m.-6 p.m. AADL downtown, 343 S 5th Ave, Ann Arbor. *Annual Tiny Expo features over 75 artists and crafters selling handmade wares. Support your community and find unique gifts for the holiday season! Drop-in crafting from 1-4 p.m. in the lower level of the library to make a card or bookmark.*

SCIO FARMS CHRISTMAS MARKET
Saturday and Sunday, December 13-14, 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Scio Farms Clubhouse, 6655 Jackson Rd. *Holiday Market with local artisan goods!*

CHRISTMAS MOVIES AT THE MICHIGAN THEATER
December Sundays at 1:30 p.m. Michigan Theater, 603 E Liberty Street, Ann Arbor. *Free and open to the public! Please reserve tickets in advance for an accurate attendance.*
Sunday, December 14: "Home Alone"
Sunday, December 21: "The Polar Express"

WINTER ECOLOGY AT THE RIVER
Sunday, December 14, 2 p.m. Leslee Niethammer Saline River Preserve, 9000 S Maple Rd. Saline. *Join Josh and Amy for a guided hike through the preserve to learn about winter by the river. Dress for the weather. Free, all ages welcome!*

COMEDY SHOW
Monday, December 15, 8-9:30 p.m. The Blind Pig, 208 S. First St. *Performances from up to 15 aspiring stand-up comics from around the state. Local comics emcee. Age 21 & up only. Free candy!*

"SAY WHAT?" COMEDY OPEN MIC
December 18, 8-10 p.m. hear.say Brewing + Theater, 2350 W. Liberty St. Ann Arbor. *Stand-up comedy open mic hosted by local comics Ned Rice and Jeff Teed. All ages 18 & up welcome to listen or sign up for a 6-minute set starting at 7:30 p.m., 8–10 p.m. Preregistration advised at* heardotsay.com/events.

AROUND THE KITCHEN TABLE PEACE HOUSE BRUNCH: COOKIE SWAP!
Sunday, December 21, 11 a.m. -1 p.m. Growing Hope Farmers Marketplace, 16 S. Washington St. Ypsilanti. *Monthly free brunch and community building event. Free to everyone — we always have omni, vegan and gluten-free options. A hot chocolate bar, cookie exchange, plus all your favorite brunch eats.*

MAGIC SHOW WITH JEFF WAWRZASZEK
Saturday, December 23, 1-1:45 p.m. AADL downtown. *Target age group (5th Graders) be damned. Be dazzled and amazed at an exciting magic show performance by local entertainer Jeff Wawrzaszek!*

DRAG BINGO WITH JADEIN BLACK
Sunday, December 28, 2-3 p.m. AADL downtown, 4th floor program room. *Join Drag Queen extraordinaire Jadein Black for a fantastic session of BINGO with music, prizes, and lots of fun! All are welcome.*

Submit an event to be featured in the next edition: submissions@groundcovernews.com

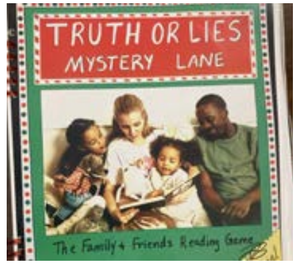
Truth or Lies reading game out now!

FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

Happy Holidays to all. Hopefully, you receive that special gift of reading this year.

Check out my new and exciting reading game! The game offers exciting, engaging reading challenges where players must decipher whether the stories are true or false. If you've been following my column this year, you might already be familiar with how it works.

My game is designed for everyone, suitable for all ages: children, family and friends. Improve your reading skills effortlessly. You can purchase it on 4th Ave and Liberty Street from me, the author, Felicia Wilbert. It is $40. Don't miss this Special Edition of Truth Or Lies Mystery Lane!



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2) Call 734-482-4110
3) Or stop by any YDL location!

DON'T HAVE A DRIVER'S LICENSE? We can work with a variety of IDs to get you your card.

YDL Holiday Closings

All YDL branches will be closed on the following holidays:

Wednesday & Thursday | Dec. 24-25 | Christmas Eve & Christmas Day

Wednesday & Thursday | Dec. 31 & Jan. 1 | New Year's Eve & New Year's Day

FEATURED EVENT
WINTER BREAK STEM
Mondays & Fridays
Dec. 22 | Dec. 26 | Dec. 29 | Jan. 2
5:30pm | YDL-Whittaker

Drop in Mondays and Fridays over the break to hone STEM skills through hands-on activities and play.

Dec 22: Cardboard Creations
Dec 26: Robot Coding - Learn to code with Ozobots and Vinci-Bots.
Dec 29: Saving Songbirds - with The Bird Center of Michigan.
Jan 2: Classic Kids Games

YPSILANTI DISTRICT LIBRARY

Memories of the deep north

CINDY GERE
Groundcover vendor No. 279

As I reflect on my younger years in the ever changing deep woods in the village of Good Hope Lake where my tribe is, the massive hills and mountains fill my memories with high trees of spruce and cedar. The wind was constantly whipping the high branches, making a whooshing noise. I remember the smells of smoked meat from the family smoke house filled with moose and salmon meat.

Grandpa would sit and tell stories of moose and bear hunts long past in the deep woods. The days would go by but no one cared about the time. It was a lazy, soft atmosphere. Everyone cared only that spring would arrive and Canadian geese would fly over the village.

There's no other place in the United States like the North, including Northern Michigan. The North, in all parts, be it Michigan or Alaska, all have very similar ways, such as planning for that extra 30 minutes to put on and take off extra layers to keep one warm and toasty. Time seems to slow down on dark winter days. Northern activities have become normalized, such as the winter games from Alaska or from Detroit — ice hockey and ice skating and skiing across the mountains of Northern Michigan.

Here in Michigan, as well as other locations in the North, ice carving competitions pop up. There is a language among the northerners for what we call clothes. In the far north of Alaska, we wear mukluks with seal bottoms in the deep snow to keep the feet extra warm, but in my village we used snug snugs called socks for the feet. And across Canada many put tuques on their heads for winter along with their bear paw gloves.

We northerners are what we love to do and how we choose to live in the North, such as driving skidoos and hunkering down in our ice fishing shacks to try and catch fish, and we call this fun. As I used to say "You know you're a lover of the North when …" (for example, when you love to ski or catch fish through a hole in the ice). Michigan is no different; only the truly hardy stay and show just how strong they truly are.

The hardest thing is truly the ice.

When I was in Alaska, I met a Yupik named Dam Lum who showed me on a river how to walk on ice; it was really the hardest thing I learned living in Alaska. You put your foot down and slide at a right angle to stop and do it all over again, step by step. I fell more times than I walked. He would walk right by me and laugh at me and my attempts at Yupik ice walking. He told me it was the first thing they learned as kids.

Cindy's mukluks.

The North is one big mystery of fun and excitement, so get off your chair and take a walk in the snow! Look at the trees on a night walk with a full moon and see the crystals of snow flicker and dance on the ground with each step you take. This is mother earth's renewal time of deep self-reflection in the approach to the new year, 2026.

Prosperity and gratitude

KEN PARKS
Groundcover vendor No. 490

The focus of the holidays is sharing in the abundance of our labor and the harvest that mother nature provides. Many so-called weeds are tasty nutritional foods. The best bonus I ever received in appreciation for my work was a bottle of homemade dandelion wine. It was delicious.

If you know my writing, you know I play with the basics of life from many perspectives and adventures. Distributing Groundcover from the Argus Farm Stop at 325 West Liberty is an adventure of interesting conversations — as well as learning that NO is an okay response from the many who cannot be distracted from their mission of coffee and groceries. Some conversations are so profound that I regularly think that freedom is growing rapidly. Will many of us bond and live in freedom at the next level?

"Woke Up This Morning" (with my mind fixed on freedom) is a song from the 60s and 70s that played in my mind the week before the Groundcover open mic at the Makeshift Art Gallery on November 21. Those who attended saw me freeze with nothing of that song coming out. My Google search had one word wrong and took me to the ozone. I also blanked out at my first backup song that I sang at the 2024 open mic. No one remembered the name and I went back to the basics of the 60s with "Blesst Be the Tie That Binds," using the Old English colloquial for Blessed.

Back to the basics is something I reflect on and practice everyday. It is easy to learn that compassion and unconditional love is the best intention to live by. You also know that not everyone learns that, and those who do are easily distracted from that lofty goal by a host of obstacles. You can wake up with freedom on your mind and quickly get lost in compliance culture and the penalties that appear if you are not in compliance. Foreclosure for back taxes on my house in Detroit was a ten-year struggle that kept me from my Cuban family until I resolved it. That's another story.

Even if we have accepted the intention to benefit all beings without exception, of course we regularly forget. We need a community of like-minded persons and regular practice for this spiritual marathon. The gratitude shared by those on the path of liberation opens the gates of creativity and abundance. We all have something to share and the best gift of all is your presence. From that felt presence, whatever needs to be done gets done as we celebrate the sacred reality that surrounds us.

The assumption that reality is sacred is unearthed by reflection and analysis. If you are a dedicated, secular humanist, you may come to another assumption. All assumptions need analysis and reflection. It should become clear that everything is related in the context of the whole, and only mindful awareness can give us the clues to make sense of the mystery before us.

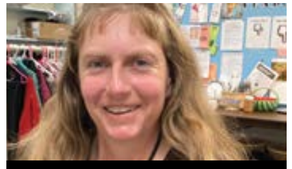
I found a University of Michigan T-shirt that said "Mindful Leader" on the back. I gave it to Khenpo Choephel in honor of his mindfulness teaching and practice at Karuna Buddhist Center which you can experience in the Upper Room of Bethlehem United Church of Christ, 423 S.Fourth Ave, on Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

The most excellent result from my Argus conversations came when Kori Kanayama contacted Groundcover to find me. Kori is a Japanese heritage chef who does cooking workshops. I was quickly invited to one in Chelsea at Agricole. I rode the WAVE that goes to Chelsea from the Meijer store on Jackson Rd. It was a fully participatory cooking workshop where I was worked into the cookie-making and into the Miso Soup pot. And then we ate together; the work and the eating both were a community celebration.

When I learned that Kori's daughter Mai was singinging in a "Messiah" concert, I asked where, and was invited to the concert at St. Mary's in Royal Oak. "The Messiah," by George Frideric Handel, is the most famous oratorio of Western music and my parents used to break into it when I was young. It is performed often by music lovers who have practiced the art well. The best of Western civilization is presented as we consider what the West has to offer the world. The human voice is intimately explored in this oratorio and it is an honor to hear those who have mastered this tradition, especially sopranos and tenors who were the standouts in the concert.

As we explore our voices and learn from those who have mastered this creative expression, we will grow in the unity of body, speech and mind. If you learn mantra practice you will connect with your sacred nature. I was given a copy of "Psycho-cybernetics" in the 60s, an important book on OM MANI PEME HUNG, the universal mantra that awakens your primordial capacity to be an awakened being, from mindful posture to mindful breathing and mindful awareness of stillness in motion. Explore your curiosity and become a Buddha!

Am I an antique?



AMANDA GALE
Groundcover vendor No. 573

Sometimes, when I watch "Little House on the Prairie" or "The Waltons," I feel my generation is robbed of all the types of 'old-fashioned' items from the eras depicted in those shows, and the creative inventiveness that surrounded these times.

The year is 1978. The Gonella's Italian Family Deli calendar on my Nana's kitchen closet wall that faces you when you go into her home's side door, assures me of this. I am seven years old, glancing appreciatively at its familiar block squares, its fall and winter decor, and its listing of Federal holidays and President's birthdays. (The President's depictions in cartoon form are kind of cute – even if they appear QUITE stilted and stuffy as people.) At least this calendar and some of my Nana's household belongings seem kind-of more old-world feel – because my Home with Granny and Grandpa and Mom is just so boringly 'modern.'

Back at our Home — Granny just now pulled this month's Detroit Edison (electric power) and MI Bell (landline telephone) bills from our mailbox. I am FULL of WONDER and EAGER for ALL that LIFE CELEBRATES — including the Thanksgiving and CHRISTmas Holidays. These are fast approaching. I am on Thanksgiving break from school; tomorrow Granny and I will prep our Family's risotto recipe, as our Family has made for this Holiday for years! We will use our 'by-hand' meat and veg grinder to prep its ingredients; that's some of the FUNNEST part! (In a few years Granny will sometimes ask me, "Should we use the electric grinder?" that we had also — and I ALWAYS ASSURE GRANNY, "No! Granny It just wouldn't be THE SAME.")

It has that 'old-world' FEEL to it, however … this also is actually Nana's (though in two to three years she'll tell us to just keep it at our Home), and each year we bring it over to prep our Risotto.

I walk over to our rotary-dial landline phone in our kitchen; no-one is using it now, so I can call my grade school friend Melinda from school. She and her family are going out of town to be with other family for the holidays, so it's NICE to get to chat with her a bit because we won't get to 'hang out' until school starts again. It's so NICE using our home phone instead of those public phone booths that even the "Carol Burnett Show" that Granny always watches poked fun at.

My friend Melinda's family is also a lot of FUN! With five children including her, a solid Catholic faith, and two REALLY FUN parents, I enjoy not only the games and antics and explorations we kids come up with when I go there — but also ESPECIALLY the family meal times, when her parents lead all their kids and any guests in REALLY FUN 'around the table' games, like historical trivia or guessing an object or activity or each person just responding to a creative 'get-to-know you' question. These parents really love their kids, and are ALWAYS SO! WELCOMING for each guest at their table. They bring out EVERYTHING INTERESTING IN EVERY ONE. They always have warm smiles and OPEN HEARTS ready to receive all that is INTERESTING from their guests. This holiday season they're focusing on one of Melinda's grandparents though, because one of them had gotten ill. So it will likely be after the Holidays for my visits there to resume; I might get to visit Melinda and her parents and brother sometime during the longer, CHRISTmas vacation though. Melinda and I often play FUN board games or act out plays or stories that we invent. Melinda's little brother sometimes HELPS us. Sometimes her Mom plays along with our pretendings.

Melinda's mom is friends with my Granny and they volunteer for our school activities and are regulars for 'PTA' meetings. (Granny brings me to these sometimes; and I was always sure to ask a question to draw out a little laughter from its otherwise somber tone.) Oh well.

In our living room I walk on our earth-tone shag rug, past the unique, stone comprised gold-colored water fountain with a draped female figure and lamp at the top of it. Granny purchased this as a special token of her earnings via Ford Motor Company Kitchen for herself and our home.

I observe the gaudy gold and black wallpaper that looks like its shapes are monsters, and am amazed that that's really in style! It's not as bad as that big, ugly medium-blue hanging lamp that Mom has in her room though; with its large carved-out, dark-shaped holes that appear just plain creepy — ESPECIALLY at night. That also is REALLY in style, though. (If only it was a FUN 'creepy,' like that pretend ghost-rifle that I got for Halloween that you look through a viewfinder and shoot the pretend villain — ghosts who make Casper ashamed. Nor like the small, black, square-box, green hand coin bank that also found me at Halloween).

I walk over to our TV console, and open the top part that has the radio-stereo in it. As I turn the knob to hear the radio, I must put my Leprechaun Pet Rock or a book on it, to prevent the sound going out or static.

Like so many U.S. American households, whenever our family tunes in to Channel 2 (the most awaited part is when Walter Cronkite once again assures us, "And that's the way it is …") each night, we must often turn that big, clunky button dial that sits atop the TV console, to get that large outdoor antenna that looks like an 1800s lightning rod or an overdone farmhouse weather-vane — to turn to just the right spot, to get a clear picture of Walter on our TV.

The songs that reach through the radio include such artists as Barbra Streisand, Peter Paul and Mary, Helen Reddy ("Keep On Singing!") and the ill-fated Karen Carpenter (John Denver also brings us Home on Country Roads). "Mariah," I perceive, is a song (not a singer) about a great storm tragedy.

The Singer sewing machine we have in our basement, however, is what Granny sometimes uses when some of our clothes need a 'touch-up.' Mom uses it to actually make some of our clothes — including, each year, my Halloween costume.

Epstein is a character on the show "Welcome Back Kotter" — but that's another matter. Then there's Mom's typewriter in our basement, most often atop our sewing machine when it's closed like a desk. Although this is also so boringly modern, I feel a little more grown-up and ready for "BIG things" because this year I learned from my Mom the "home row" for typing. Mom has some nice, in-style clothing and effects. My favorite "pop-thing" she has is a mood ring that turns colors, somehow, according to how the wearer is FEELING. Mom also does some 'nail-into-boards' art and velvet backdrop painting art. She has turquoise jewelry, a macrame purse and belt, and bell-bottom jeans. Mom's hair-style is 'puffy' in the center, with side-hair curlets surrounding the bottom of her ears. Granny always wears her hair completely puffy bee-hive style, and Grandpa has sideburns and a baseball cap. People don't look like this on "The Waltons" and "Little House on the Prairie."

Sometimes as a family we watch the old silent black and white film reels that have to be attached to a film projector and the machine with the reel feeding through. It aimed at a blank screen or a sheet. Through these, I get to meet my Nono in his middle-aged years. He had severe memory loss during his presence in my mom's preteen years and my youth to 4th grade when he passed from this life. Through the films I got to see him dancing around for an Italian neighborhood gathering, and they were all dancing either the "Tarantella" or "The Hokie Pokey" or maybe some combination. Nono looked right into the camera and his crisp, clear eyes that I know were blue — just twinkled as he smiled.

These were the same type of film reels that we'd watch — children's movies and children's stories made into movies — at school, often around the holidays, each grade school class would observe several.

However, we now even have the even more really modern film reels that are in-color for our new family moving pictures. Our still family photos are all in color also, these also contrast with the old black and white family photo albums from Granny's childhood, and from when she and Grandpa had courted and then gotten married.

In this year that I will turn eight years old, my mom and I would never even imagine that years later we'll lose all our family photos to an 'eviction.' The thought would have been HEART-WRENCHING as it was when it occurred. If we had known — would we have continued taking photos?

The cameras we use are Kodak and Polaroid. Film is brought to a store for developing, while single photos from Polaroid are pulled out and developed in 1-2 minutes. This is just so modern. Other aspects that are modern include drive-in theatres, dishwashers, most clocks, and watches displaying Arabic (not Roman) numerals and lighting that is two development steps out from Edison's incandescent bulb.

A&W food brought out on a tray to your vehicle is a reminder of at least the 1950s; however, there's now more and more drive-through fast food. The Bob Jo's Frozen Custard stand in Southgate, Mich. reminds Grandpa of the local frozen custard craze of the 1940s; I just like its really different "Blue Moon" ice cream. However, a Baskin Robbins that amazingly has 31 flavors (not just the standard strawberry, chocolate, or vanilla) has recently opened up, and it will become a favorite for me and some of my summer softball team members.

Grandpa's WWII navy hat, that he allows me to playfully engulf all of my face in, is maybe a little less modern. Grandpa talks with me about our dogs, my schooling and his job at the steel mill. Once for my birthday and once for Christmas he made me special-designed cakes! His listening to Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby records are a bit nostalgic. Granny brings me with her on shopping errands when I'm on school vacations. When I was younger a few years ago, Granny would bring me along

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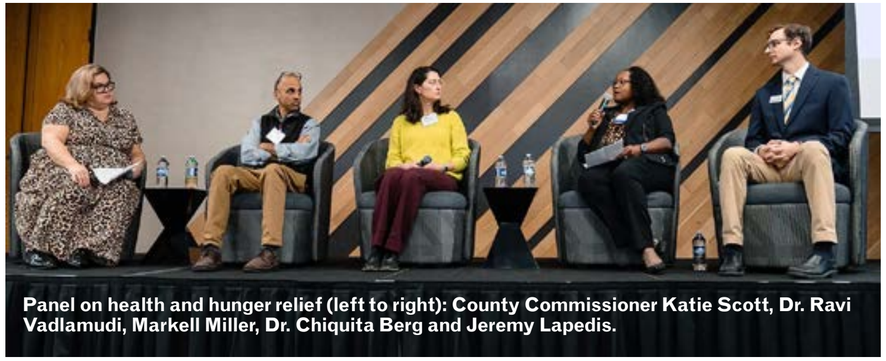
The state of affordable housing in Washtenaw

RACHEL
Groundcover contributor



Panel on health and hunger relief (left to right): County Commissioner Katie Scott, Dr. Ravi Vadlamudi, Markell Miller, Dr. Chiquita Berg and Jeremy Lapedis.

Last month I had a chance to attend the 2025 State of Homelessness and Affordable Housing conference at Washtenaw Community College. Hosted during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, it coincided with Washtenaw Housing Alliance's 25th anniversary and the 5th anniversary of the Ann Arbor Affordable Housing millage.

The breakfast conference had a three-part focus: food, health and housing. There were guest speakers, panel discussions, a preview of a housing documentary called "The Road Home," and a forecast that was bleak. The H.R.1 bill passed in late July recently froze federal funding to essential survival programs like the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Medicaid. "This bill will cause people to die," said Dr. Jeremy Lapedis of the Washtenaw Health Project.

The restructures are expanding work requirements for food aid; shifting hundreds of millions in SNAP administrative costs onto states; halving USDA shipments to food banks like Food Gatherers; requiring Medicaid eligibility renewals twice a year; and continuing to sweep homeless encampments out of sight without addressing their roots. In other words, being poor in the United States is more of a crime than ever before.

Dr. Ravi Vadlamudi from Packard Health talked about the challenges of healthcare without housing. Pneumonia and wound care are manageable, but chronic medical problems like diabetes or kidney disease are virtually untreatable under the circumstances of homelessness. Hospitals will not even schedule major procedures for unhoused patients, like colonoscopies. “You can imagine someone in a tent trying to drink a gallon of GoLYTELY.” His takeaway: people can only think about long term goals when they are not in survival mode.

“Housing is health,” said Dr. Chiquita Berg, Trinity vice president of community health and well-being. The figures are not healthy. Last year it took an average of 202 days to get into housing, and at least 704 people experienced homelessness in Washtenaw County this year. Alpha House has a waitlist of 120-130 families and the Delonis Center's residential waitlist can be 50-60 people long. Hundreds of families will lose their rental assistance under HUD restructuring and the state housing voucher pause, 12,000 to 18,000 Washtenaw County residents could lose Marketplace and Medicaid eligibility soon, and food insecurity will be at an all-time high.

Statistics and numbers were the framework of the conference, but its emotional heart was people. Dr. Ravi shared his experience doing home care for a terminally ill patient. As her cancer progressed and she lost more and more weight, she was steadfast in wanting to remain in the apartment where she finally had her own bed, kitchen, and the comfort she never knew when she was unhoused.

Washtenaw Health Project told us about a woman discharged from the ER with 48 hours of medication she could not afford to refill. WHP fixed a Michigan Department of Health and Human Services error, found out she was eligible for Medicaid right away, and connected her to Community Mental Health treatment so she could go back to work with peace of mind.

The brightest forecast at the conference was affordable housing. Jennifer Hall, executive director of the Ann Arbor Housing Commission (AAHC), shared pictures of seven new developments breaking ground in the city and talked about the public-private partnerships that make them possible. For-profit developers are the biggest creators of affordable homes, which cost the same to build as market-rate housing. In 2020, a City millage passed with 73% support that puts $7 million a year toward low-income housing. AAHC has 2345 housing vouchers for Washtenaw and Monroe counties, 20 properties in Ann Arbor, and 1,071 units underway, offering opportunities for thousands of people who work in Ann Arbor but cannot afford to live there.

Eating croissants and fresh fruit with well-dressed office workers, it was not lost on me that everyone in the room represented organizations with overhead costs and salaries higher than the lifetime savings of the people they helped. The caterers refilling the hot trays made a fraction of the income of the city planners there, and the house-shaped stress balls with WHA logos at every seat could have sponsored 200 bus tokens instead.

Some of the groups only rely on student interns, barebones staff and unpaid boards to fulfill their mission, but others have executives with six figure compensation.

Mutual aid organizations have a term for charities that prop up social inequalities and top-down hierarchies like this: the nonprofit industrial complex. "Dysfunction is part of the plan," says Shihab Jackson, a longtime community volunteer. "It keeps a small army of well-paid administrators gainfully employed in a system they are supposedly tasked to disrupt." If the coalitions working to end homelessness in Washtenaw County truly reached their goals, he points out, their careers would end.

Two-time Emmy winning director Kameron Donald offered a more hopeful analysis on the conference stage. "There's no fame in this, no getting

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12/21 Walk for the Homeless: End the criminalization of survival on the longest night

ERICK THE DREAM GIVER
Groundcover vendor No. 617

On December 21, the Winter Solstice—the longest, coldest night of the year—I will once again organize our annual protest, the 12/21 Walk for the Homeless. We march to honor Homeless Remembrance Day and to protest the constant, unjust criminalization of poverty and survival.

For over a decade, this walk has been a national call to action, launched by Eric the Dream Giver and supported by a network of advocates, including Groundcover News here in Ann Arbor and Real Change in Seattle. Our core message remains: Poverty is not a crime. Yet, Michigan and most communities nationwide continue to implement policies designed to punish the poor and strip rights from all but the wealthiest.

The roots of homelessness are not individual failures, but catastrophic economic forces that have engineered a universal threat. These include increasing financial instability, the attack on housing security where rising property taxes and other factors result in vulnerability for even those whose housing seemed totally secure, and capitalism failing to provide basic human needs and creating an economy where survival is a privilege, not a right.

A significant portion of our unhoused neighbors struggle with mental health conditions. We demand that cities across Michigan and the nation shift resources from punitive policing to dedicated mental health crisis teams that offer support, shelter and long-term care.

Another example of how the homeless are discriminated against even if they’re not on the streets is the disliving in their vehicles. When cities pass ordinances that ban RVs or heavily restrict where they can be parked, instead of solving a housing crisis, they are criminalizing a legitimate lifestyle and removing the last line of defense against absolute homelessness. Our demand is the immediate repeal of this and all other discriminatory ordinances that unjustly criminalize people experiencing homelessness.

The economic system has made the bottom 99% vulnerable to falling into poverty and becoming criminalized. This failure is creating a universal police state designed to manage and punish the poor, ultimately stripping rights away from everybody.

The 12/21 Walk for the Homeless is a vital part of a national movement demanding justice. Our demands are clear: End the laws that punish people for poverty and support laws that protect them, like the Michigan Homeless Bill of Rights (HB 4919).

Moving forward, the work requires more than just walking. We must take direct political action. Contact your lawmakers and in Michigan ask your representatives to support bills like HB 4919. People who are so inclined can also run for public office, challenging the status quo.

It is time for Michigan to stop passing "stumbling blocks" and start building pathways to housing. Join us in demanding that our tax dollars fund housing and healthcare, not arrests and incarceration.

Support the Movement: Join the 12/21 Walk! The 12/21 Walk for the Homeless is an annual, decentralized demonstration. The action starts on December 21 at sunset, 5:05 p.m. at Detroit City Hall. People are meeting in downtown areas across the country; I encourage readers in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti to organize their own walks. City Halls are a good place to start. I invite everybody to walk — pick up a sign, join hands, and walk with candles in your local downtown area; post your walk on social media (use the hashtag #1221WalkForTheHomeless); and share the message for people to join us.

If you want to walk with me and follow my ongoing advocacy, please subscribe to my YouTube channel, Eric the Dream Giver.

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MDHHS to invest $37.5 million in opioid settlement funds to further expand recovery housing across MI

LYNN STUFTIN
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

As part of a statewide strategy designed to save lives and reduce overdose deaths, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) plans to invest $37.5 million into stable housing to help Michigan residents recover from substance use disorder (SUD). This funding is part of the FY 2026 state budget that includes $131.75 million for SUD prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery services.

"Ensuring someone has a safe place to live is one of the most powerful resources we can provide to prevent setbacks in recovery," said Elizabeth Hertel, MDHHS director. "These investments provide people in recovery with the security, structure and dignity they need to thrive. By directing opioid settlement funds to stable housing, we are creating meaningful, lasting change in communities across the state."

A recent analysis by MDHHS found that more than 7,500 discharges from publicly funded SUD treatment annually resulted in people leaving treatment without stable housing. To address this gap, the department has set a goal to create 3,467 new recovery housing beds by 2028, an increase of 40%.

Michigan is slated to receive more than $1.8 billion from national opioid settlements by 2040, with half being distributed to the State of Michigan Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund and the other half being distributed directly to county, city and township governments. Over the last several years, MDHHS has distributed settlement funds in support of the state strategy addressing prevention, harm reduction, treatment and recovery. This allowed the state to expand recovery housing by more than 200 beds in the last two years through $8 million in investments.

"We know that the transition out of treatment is one of the most critical times for individuals with substance use disorder," said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive and Michigan Opioids Task Force co-chair. "It's a time when individuals face an increased risk of returning to substance use. Without safe and stable housing, the risk of overdose increases dramatically. Recovery housing is a medically informed, evidence-based solution that offers individuals the stability and support needed to maintain their recovery and rebuild their lives."

According to a Michigan Association of Recovery Residences (MARR) survey, recovery housing assists individuals in successfully obtaining and maintaining employment. Upon entering a MARR-certified recovery house, about 17% of individuals indicated needing employment assistance. This statistic decreases during their stay to about 8% at the 90-day mark.

Recent recovery housing investments include:

$1.5 million to support a new recovery housing project by Wellspring in Southfield in partnership with the Michigan State Housing Development Authority and Oakland County government. Construction will soon begin on 60 new recovery housing units.

$3 million for The McDaniel Apartments at Andy's Place in Jackson, 26 affordable apartments and vital recovery services designed to serve expectant families overcoming opioid addiction.

$3.8 million through the Recovery Housing Investment Program to purchase or lease homes across the state dedicated to supporting individuals in recovery, adding more than 110 new beds to the state's total capacity.

"This is a matter of both equity and urgency," said MDHHS senior advisor Tommy Stallworth. "Black and low-income communities are disproportionately impacted by housing instability and the heightened risk of overdose. Our investment in recovery housing reflects a strategic, data-informed commitment to ensuring every Michigan resident has a real opportunity for sustained recovery. Additionally, these projects demonstrate how state and local governments can work together to advance Governor Whitmer's goal of expanding access to affordable housing."

For more information about SUD resources, visit Michigan.gov/SUD.

Additional information regarding proposed programming under Michigan's Opioid Healing and Recovery Fund is provided on the opioids settlement website.

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rich," he said, noting that it was rare to find himself in a room so full of people who found their purpose in life. "You really have a heart of helping." He was there to preview his upcoming documentary "The Road Home," an artistic partnership with AAHC about the housing crisis. His film about Ann Arbor's historically Black neighborhoods, "A Letter to the West Side," sold out its debut in February. "The Road Home" premieres at the Michigan Theater in March.

We ended the morning with a call and response led by Hall and surprise guest Morice Norris from the Detroit Lions: "Yes, we can! BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING!" The critical state of homelessness in Washtenaw County shows that we need to.

➡ **ANTIQUE** from page 7

to a pond of ducks by Ford Motor where she worked, and we'd invest a Sunday afternoon feeding them (we didn't know we should've brought seeds instead of bread that was not the best for them). This would often be after a trip to the "Lighting Candle Church" as I like to call St. Henry's in Lincoln Park. It was always so fun because we'd light some candles as part of our prayings.

Once when I had a bad cold for a week, Granny brought a fun water jug in my room to make drinking lots of water fun! She also bought these two little curious motorcycles that she or I would hide somewhere in my room for the seeking person to find, as I was getting better.

Granny and I often play card games like Crazy Eights, Old Maid, Go Fish, and Memory Game. Granny is also who taught me how to read and when I was five, I was reading to her and writing my own stories like "The Flower that Stamped Its Stem", "The Truth Fairy," and a Pecos Bill style cowboy story.

In just a few days, just before my birthday in December, I'll need to be pushed to the old Oakwood hospital where I was born to have my appendix removed, though none of my family know this yet. My second grade teacher will stop by my four-day hospital stay to tell me how glad she is that I survived, to give me some birthday and Christmas cards from my class members, and to help me 'catch-up' on my homework. I'm glad there's TV in the hospital because I get to watch two of my FAVORITE shows "Happy Days" and "Laverne and Shirley."

Fonzie is a good, all-American guy, "cool-type" of person. He's a hard-worker in his mechanic shop, and he's always a good and helpful friend. His character is "breaking ground," allowing a cool, tough guy to also share a softer side.

The TV guide for this evening says we'll meet up with his more tame counterpart, a high school kid named Richie Cunningham, and his friends and family at Arnold's Diner. Mr. Defazio, the Italian waiter, will chat with them and serve them; there will be laughter and fun. A young couple, Joanie and Chachi, will also stop by, as will a "hot" woman named Leather. Mrs. C is always supportive and has good practical life wisdom, and Fonzie has a lot of sharp sense. This Christmas episode will find mutual encouragement by making sure to invite Fonzie to be a part of it. Meanwhile, Lavene and Shirley who work for Shotz Brewery will go singing at an elderly home. These two shows are really popular — especially Happy Days.

The year I was born, TV had only been around for about 20 years; it's amazing it's now in color and not black and white as it was then. In 1978, we have no VCRs, video games, iPods and of course we were just at the brink of a beginning for computers. Our culture "at large" could not completely have imagined these just yet; though the concept for these items was beginning to take shape. There is a lot more reading of books, and more direct communication with people. Oddly though, most high school seniors often look like they're in their 30s. There seems to be a great deal of pressure for "maturity" and upward mobility and being ready for new technology.

When I return home, besides my catching up with homework, Mom will play Barbies and dollhouse with me as I recuperate; and actually, Mom so beautifully and capably put together the dollhouse kit that crafted it.

I will be sure to get to Nana's soon for our regular visits! I'm glad there's more of a traditional, previous world feel for a little girl to explore at Nana's. Nana brings out the Italian chocolate boxes that have long instead been the just right home for her heirloom jewelry. She carefully picks up each piece like a show and tell item, telling me special memories and meaning of each one. There are the two necklaces ("kadanga") that had belonged to Nana's mom, and that she gave to her, and the two or three rings from Nana's mom and a sister. There's the "gold 13" pendant that Nana's mom gave her for "Good Blessing" travel to America, and good fortune here. Thirteen has long been a "lucky" number in Italy, and this 24k gold was made in honor of Pope Leo XIII, a champion of the working people's rights. There are several crosses, including the two that are "look-through," kind of like my toy view-master — one displays the Lord's Prayer, and the other a depiction of Jesus on the cross.

(Nana will give to me the blue cross with red flowers; it was hers for a long time, and she wants me to have it. This, so sadly like our family photos, will one day be lost to an eviction.)

There are many cameos, brooches, earrings, and other various pendants and necklaces, each with their own story of who gave it and why. Special occasions and "close-to-heart" people were remembered.

There are two pocket watches that Nana's dad gave her to bring to America, also for good fortune and to forever remember him, now that a whole ocean and another brewing war would separate them, but for one last visit, three years later, then forever.

The smaller pocket watch that is gold colored somehow has the "modern" Arabic numbers, and a depiction of a steam train, rolling right out at you. It also has a "fob" with it.

The silver-colored, quite large pocket watch that might have been slightly larger than Nana's Dad's hands — has the beautiful old, Roman numerals though; and just a touch of some green foliage and red formal decor on its face. It has decorative, fancy shapes all around on it; there is no 'fob' to it. Nana says that its exaggerated size was the style back when that one was made. Nana carefully keeps also and frequently shows me - Nono's war medal from when he'd served in WWI in the Italian Army; and also a cute, little white chapel-like frame that a photo of her and Nono just after their marriage and just right before their move to America is set in. Nana often cries as she shows me these special items, and tells me the story of each one.

Now that Nono is gone from her with his memory loss, the observable contrast of her and Nono's juvenile, smiling, eager innocence in that photo — is just brutal. It's part of our family's story though, and Nono has always been Nana's man; and we must never lose that; and we won't. Nana shows me her wedding ring on her finger; she tells me it's been there since Nono placed it on her hand when they married, and she will never remove it.

Around Nana's house there are some items that handyman Uncle Mario, Nana's brother, made, such as the green "skanette" — a versatile, wooden piece that can be used as a stepstool or a quick sit, but that Nana will use mostly as rest for her swollen legs in her later years. Somehow Uncle Mario also crafted a green comfy cushion for it, and it has a handle-part that he built into the middle of it.

There's the precious violin that he carved out and then installed the strings; he also crafted its bow. There are two knives at Nana's house and our own, that Uncle Mario fashioned the steel blades and the wood handles for; these are really good cutting knives, and the handles are really solid.

In Nana's basement there's that long, dark-brown, glossy dining table that we find useful not only for holiday dining and as a holiday meal prep table, though also Granny insists it will save our lives also with couch pillows over us with the table over us when tornado season occurs — usually in late spring, though in July 1980 a horrible one will rip through, affecting many. And under that table, we will go! We were preserved by God's hand.

Also in Nana's basement, there's her 1930s, white-with-black-burners stove and over that each Christmas and Easter we prepare our family Ravioli recipe.

And in another section there's Nana and Nono's old phonograph — the type that can play only the oldest of records ever made — the old, really thick type that smash and break if you drop them just once.

Our family enjoys learning the Greats from the 1920s and the 1930s again on that old phonograph. My favorite is Mario Lanza and sometimes I segue just myself to go downstairs and listen to his singing. Nana is always GLAD the records are getting use and keeping our family traditions ALIVE!

Mario Lanza's music was formative for the so 'modern' rockstar Elvis, whose music we all love and who died tragically just the year before. However, concert specials from when he was alive are often featured year-round, and also some of his Christmas concerts in December. Dad follows the concert sometimes by playing an interview with Elvis from when he was alive.

Maybe not everything 'modern' is 'so bad;' Baptist preachers are always warning us of all the dangers of that even more modern rock group, KISS, though.

In Nana's garage there are two old cars, one from the 1930s, the other possibly 1925. These Nana keeps in museum condition for the sentiment that Nono had for them. It was also a part of his upward rise, becoming fully US-American though his family in Italy had been a part of the upper class there.

Also, in Nana's garage, a fun, wooden wine press which with Nono had sometimes made his own "vino" the good old fashioned way. In Nana's larger cellar in the basement (there are two), there is a box of brushes and a hoof pick that Nono used to groom his army captain's horse. Those were dear to his heart and in a few years when I become the owner of a horse at a boarding stable, Nono will allow me to use the two of these I ask for to groom my own horse. There's also a keychain with a plastic green horse shoe and a wheat penny in the middle of it that was Nono's.

On many days that we are not using Nana's basement to prep our family recipes, Nana has two clothesline ropes running all along the basement length, on one side of it. Though Nana has a clothes dryer, she still sometimes likes to dry her laundry as when she was in Italy. Then we arrive at another curious, very special memento. The trunk that Nana and Nono used to bring all of whatever they were bringing to America with them.

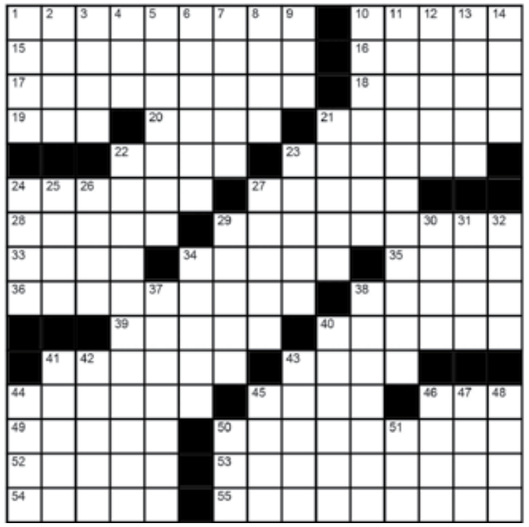
It became a sacred resting place for our family's oldest photos and portrait paintings, ones of my great, great grandparents, who were Nana and Nono's parents. And Nana would show these to me frequently and tell me the stories of her childhood — of her family, our family. She would cry and remember and it would be good and necessary to feel happy again that we were keeping them alive — always in our hearts and also me being the next generation.

Nana kept her wedding dress in there and there were other special family mementos and linens in that good old trunk. I'm ashamed that before the very first time that Nana opened its contents and her heart to share spilled out with it with me; I had thought it must be that there's some million dollar value that our family is keeping secretly in there,

see **ANTIQUE** page 13 ➡

CROSSWORD

International Network of Street Papers



ACROSS
1. Harder to understand
10. Tall fur hat
15. Greek school of wrestling
16. Bone cavities
17. Shield bearing a coat of arms (Var.)
18. River of Deutschland
19. Barely get by, with "out"
20. Earl Grey and others
21. Changing color
22. Microsoft product
23. The study of plants
24. Places to say "I do"
27. Barbaric
28. Aussie smoker's request
29. Loan for a start-up
33. Bit
34. Key ingredient of many smoothies
35. How one finds Easter eggs
36. Brand of Irish whiskey
38. Eyelashes
39. Primitive locking mechanism, as for a gate
40. African grasslands
41. Shoe for a tiny foot
43. "___ Poppins"
44. Educational programming language
45. Scottish clothing chest
46. Battering device
49. Pathetic one (Brit.)
50. Inhumane caning of feet as punishment
52. Clean one's feathers
53. [Intentionally left blank]
54. Mails
55. Plot

DOWN
1. Church area
2. Endorse
3. Pivot
4. Sylvester, to Tweety
5. Parsonage
6. They direct you to your seat
7. Lieu
8. Greek god of love
9. Bled, as colors
10. Minerals used in paint (Var.)
11. In a harmful way
12. Draft holder
13. Salty, as seawater
14. Yin counterpart
21. Question the truth of
22. Passionate
23. Spread widely, as a rumor
24. Jewish month
25. Old stringed instrument
26. Put one's foot down?
27. Romantic infatuation
29. Dinner prayer
30. "___ Lang Syne"
31. Do needlework
32. Flight data, briefly
34. Malodorous
37. Provisions
38. Notarized
40. More immense
41. Trumpet
42. Humorist Nash
43. Botch
44. Dangerous biters
45. German philosopher known for the Categorical Imperative
46. Indian princess
47. Gulf of ___, off the coast of Yemen
48. Mean, medium, and ____
50. Greyhound, e.g.
51. Zilch

Sudoku ★★★★☆☆ 4puz.com

9	5		2			1		
4	7	1	6					
3			4					
2	9	7						6
5								1
8						4	2	5
					4			9
					6	2	7	3
		2			3		1	4

Fill in the squares so that each row, column, and 3-by-3 box contain the numbers 1 through 9.

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS *November 28, 2025 edition*

5	9	1	3	6	2	4	8	7
4	8	6	1	5	7	3	2	9
3	7	2	4	8	9	6	5	1
6	3	8	9	1	4	5	7	2
1	2	7	5	3	6	9	4	8
9	4	5	7	2	8	1	6	3
2	5	3	6	7	1	8	9	4
7	1	9	8	4	5	2	3	6
8	6	4	2	9	3	7	1	5

untitled 1

AUGUSTINE JAY
Groundcover vendor No. 678

breakfast church, sleep

and later on i'll catch a show

gonna buy some merch to keep

hopefully a patch to sew

you know i'd like to hear from you

somewhere in the time between

tell me what you're gonna do

about your day and how you're feeling

write to me and i'll respond

perpetuating our new bond

send a picture i can keep

because i really love your face

when i see you my heart leaps

up past the clouds to outer space

...like a rocket

Til I See You Again

TERESA BASHAM
Groundcover vendor No. 571

To All My Family & Friendz Who Passed A Way

Only God knowz,
Where you're at,
Who you wit,
What you're doin now,
You're having thee best time,
I know you're talkin to everyone that
You've missed so much,
Only God knowz,
How much I miss,
I know you're at bliss,
I know you're up in heaven sayin wow,
I never wanted you ta go,
I know you're in a better place,
You'll be in my heart, soul, & mind,
I'll alwayz miss you,
Til I see you again,
For you itz just a new beginning,
I'll just have to wait & then,
I'll see you again,
I miss & love you so.

December Time

SHAWN SWOFFER
Groundcover vendor No. 574

Jingle bells
Sugar cookie smells
Singing carols joyful hearts
Bringing the spirit
The lights burning bright
Elves and santa ride by
Merry and bright
No Scrooges
Bright glow bright feelings
Merry Christmas to all and goodnight!

Snow (ICE QUEEN)

MARQUETTA "Q" CLEMENTS
Groundcover contributor

Beautiful and Deadly
Merciless and Heavenly

Pure but intoxicating
Like a woman dancing
Can't resist the devil operating
One touch can freeze you, give you joy,
or have you contemplating

The homeless die
Beauty turns to occupation
Struggling for heat
Staring at death, devastated

You lay weak and tired
Or conquer defeat
You give in to the winter
Or you ride it to spring

I became the Ice Queen!

Happy Sweet Sixteen

LA SHAWN COURTWRIGHT
Groundcover vendor No. 56

"Happy Sweet Sixteen to You, my awesome, beautiful Daughter"!!
I Love You soooooo much!!
Telling You that, letting You know that
is definitely in order
I want this day to be extraordinary
for and to You
You are strong and a success
in anything You put Your mind to
I don't want to get melancholy
because this is Your Special Day!!
All about You!!
"So, Happy Sweet Sixteen Young Lady!!"
Never forget that You are exceptionally outstanding!!
And that I've always loved You and always will!!
So enjoy this beautiful day doing You!!

Love Always,
Your Mom

➡ **ANTIQUE** from page 11

and that that is why Nana wouldn't yet open it to me. i.e. like maybe she thought I couldn't keep it secret!

I could hardly bear the shame I realized when I was at last deemed old enough to appreciate its contents and cry with Nana about it. Though always being strong enough for her that instead it had been a treasure so far greater than ever I could have imagined, our memories and ties with each other. Within the last year or so is when Nana started to share it with me. These are such meaningful times, discussing our family story and journey.

So in 1978, as I think about all the really "modern" stuff around my household, and find some greater wonderment in the family history and ties to previous eras, I have also a great wondering. Now as we continue getting so "modern" I just wonder in the future, will this make me an antique? Will we humans reject the Alexandrian lie of "No more to conquer," and always hold onto what matters most? Will we prize our people, and work hard at our relationships? Will we value our Creator and His values to guide us? Will we walk in His love?

from the ARCHIVES

15 YEARS OF NEWS AND SOLUTIONS FROM THE GROUND UP

The legend lives on at Downtown Home and Garden

SUSAN BECKETT
Publisher emeritus

Downtown Home and Garden will close on December 24, 2025 after 119 years in Ann Arbor.

Paying attention to detail is rewarded when ambling around Downtown Home and Garden. Among the treasures are virgin maple, Bay City milled flooring, the original Fleetwood Diner sign, and an old grain elevator that once dispensed mixed seeds for feeding farmyard birds. Rumor has it that vestiges of those old seeds are still in the chute. A tour of the basement reveals the last horse stalls in downtown Ann Arbor.

The building has been in continuous use supplying farmers and gardeners since circa 1906 and the persistence of the building and business model earned the admiration of owner Mark Hodesh. He originally acquired them back in 1975 from Emma, Herman and Gotleib Hertler. The store was being run then by 89-year old Emma and her nephew, George. Michigan was suffering from factory closings in the early 70s and downtown Ann Arbor was more populated by blowing newspapers and vagrants than active shoppers and diners; families did not venture there. Briarwood was new and shopping malls reigned.

With more than 11 vacancies on Main St., property prices were low enough for young guys to buy in. Hodesh's first downtown business was the Fleetwood Diner which he founded when he was 26, after apprenticing at Red's Rite Spot, a 13-seat diner run by Red Shelton and eventually displaced by the Tower Inn. Back then you could get a quality breakfast at the Fleetwood for less than a dollar. Even then, Hodesh believed in quality ingredients and buying locally.

"The eggs were from Bilby's Farm, the toast bread came from the Modern Bakery in Detroit — best bread you could get back then, and the jam came from Smuckers, and none of that mixed fruit, either," Hodesh said.

Emma Hertler must have recognized his appreciation of quality and history, because according to Hodesh, she bestowed the company on him. "Sell it to him, Georgie; he's a good boy. He gets up early," she reputedly commanded her nephew. Hodesh kept the name Hertler Brothers and made money his first year. He shrewdly purchased the lot next door and made it into the store parking lot. Business grew 500 percent in five years.

Hodesh and his wife, artist Margaret Parker, found another business opportunity in the Castine Inn in Maine at a time they were ready for a change. They sold the Hertler Brothers name and business and moved to the Inn located on Penobscot Bay, north of Bar Harbor. Parker appreciated the light in Maine where the blues were bluer and it sparkled like Greece. She created large pieces of art for the Inn and Castine School while they were there.

Hertler Brothers faltered in the late 1990's, and faced with the prospect of an abandoned building on the property they still owned, Hodesh and Parker elected to return to Ann Arbor in 1997 and restore the business, though they no longer had rights to the name. The renamed Downtown Home and Garden again prospered under their ownership. Like today, it was a time of gardening resurgence with an emphasis on organic gardening.

Parker redesigned the parking lot, transforming it into a popular location for weddings and parties when the store is closed. She also does advertising covers, including those for their store, and is a member of the Commission on Art and Public Places. She was recently honored at the Grand Rapids Art Prize competition for her entry "C'ood," a piece 10 feet high and 24 feet in diameter. It was constructed with help from volunteers and made from donated t-shirts — very fitting for a work whose name is a contraction of "Common Good." A great interactive piece, it is looking for a home, either indoors or out, for as long as it lasts.

She may be doing some more design work this summer since Hodesh recently purchased the lot on the northwest corner of his building that once sported a parking structure exit ramp. Look for more on this project in an upcoming issue of Groundcover.

Hodesh is not sentimental about the business but likes being part of downtown Ann Arbor. The grittiness is part of the appeal, as is the sturdiness of the building. The store is a small infrastructure project with heating and hot water systems sized for a house. In the winter, they wear more sweaters. In the summer, an awning protects the store from direct sun.

Through good times and bad, the store's foundation proved solid: Plant a seed, grow a plant, harvest, cook and can it. The products carried today are similar to those stocked for the last 100 years. The town has changed and today's patrons are more urban gardener than farmer, but just like his earlier Hertler Brothers and Fleetwood customers, they have their eyes wide open and are ready to appreciate something good.

Originally published in the December 2010 - January 2011 edition of Groundcover News.

transit **RESOURCE CORNER**

AATA'S "THE RIDE"
734-996-0400
Serves the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area. Regular bus routes operated via a pay-per-ride system ($1.50 fare). Offers discounts for seniors (free), youth, as well as low-income (half-fare) and disabled people (see A-Ride). Downtown workers, ask your employers about Go!Pass.
Eastern Michigan University: Students, faculty and staff members can visit Service EMU in the Student Center to purchase 30-day unlimited rides at a discount offered by EMU. You must present your student or employee I.D. card when you purchase your pass.
University of Michigan: Active students, faculty and staff at U-M and Michigan Medicine have unlimited access to TheRide's fixed-route bus service with a valid yellow Mcard. To take advantage of your sponsored ride, swipe your valid yellow Mcard when you board the bus. Your valid yellow Mcard will serve as your bus pass.

Visit the AATA Office at 2700 S. Industrial Hwy, Ann Arbor to enroll for reduced fares. Visit their website at theride.org *for more information.*

AATA'S "A-RIDE"
734-996-0400
Serves the Ann Arbor-Ypsilanti Area. Offers door-to-door transportation for people with disabilities who struggle to use the fixed route system. Rides must be reserved in advance. An application is required and can be found at www.theride.org/services/ride-eligibility and mailed or delivered in-person to the AATA office.

PEOPLE'S EXPRESS
877-214-6073
Within Washtenaw County, People's Express serves the residents of Northfield Township and Saline. Offers a Michigan Medicine commuter route. Fare is determined by time of day, starting point and destination. Call between 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., Monday-Friday, to reserve a ride. More information can be found at peoplesexpress.org

MICHIGAN FLYER
517-333-0400
Stops in East Lansing, Whitmore Lake, Ann Arbor and Detroit Metro Airport. Ann Arbor stop is at Blake Transit Center. Tickets can be purchased online at michiganflyer.com Tickets must be purchased in advance.

D2A2
D2A2 is an express bus service connecting Detroit and Ann Arbor. The service provides hourly trips between the two communities for 16 hours a day during the week (6 a.m.-11 p.m.) and limited service on Saturday and Sunday. Fare purchased at the bus (passengers 2-64 yrs): $8 one way. Online booking discount (passengers 2-64 yrs): $6. Eligible senior/disability fare: $4. Infants 24 months and younger ride free. Tickets are non-refundable. Two free changes are allowed up to five minutes prior to your scheduled departure. *Make reservation at* d2a2.com

RIDE THE WAVE
734-475-9494
Call Center: Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Door-to-door throughout Western Washtenaw to anywhere in Washtenaw County, Chelsea—Dexter—Ann Arbor fixed route Connectors, Downtown Chelsea free shuttle, Discounts for older people, people with disabilities, low income, and children through 12th grade. ridethewavebus.org

CONGRATS DR. LUIZA DUARTE CAETANO!
ON DEFENDING YOUR DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DECEMBER 9TH!
PhD
YOUR GROUNDCOVER FAMILY IS PROUD OF YOU

WINTER PROGRAM INFORMATION
DAY TIME WARMING SHELTER LOCATIONS:

Location	Address	Dates Available
Ypsilanti Freighthouse (Mon.- Thur., 8am-6pm)	100 Market Place Ypsilanti	Nov. 10, 2025 - March 31, 2026
Delonis Center (Weekends only)	312 W. Huron St. Ann Arbor	Nov. 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026
Zion Lutheran Church	1510 Hill St., Ann Arbor	Nov. 10, 2025 - Nov. 21, 2025
Ann Arbor Friend's Meeting	1420 Hill St. Ann Arbor	Dec. 9, 2025 - Jan. 3, 2025
Ann Arbor Day Site	TBD	Dec. 8, 2025 - Jan. 9, 2026
St. Mary's Student Parish	331 Thompson St. Ann Arbor	Jan. 5, 2026 - Jan. 30, 2026
First Congregational Church	608 E. Williams St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 2, 2026 - Feb. 13, 2026
First Baptist Church	517 E. Washington St. Ann Arbor	Feb. 16, 2026 - March 27, 2026

All Washtenaw County office building lobbies are available as warming center sites during normal business hours.

Unless otherwise specificed, all above warming shelters operate Monday through Friday during normal business hours. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact the Delonis Center at **734-662-2829**. For updates, visit **bit.ly/washtenaw-warming**.

WASHTENAW COUNTY MICHIGAN 1826
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Last updated: 11/5/25

OVERNIGHT SHELTER INFORMATION

Winter shelter information: Winter daytime and overnight shelter accommodations are available throughout the winter shelter season from **November 10, 2025 - April 14, 2026** for any individual seeking emergency shelter during the cold winter months.

- **Daytime shelter** - Monday - Thursday, 8am - 6pm at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse (100 Market Place, Ypsilanti, MI 48198)
- **Overnight shelter** - Nighttime accommodations are at the Delonis Center; 312 W. Huron St., Ann Arbor, and at offsite locations including Congregation partners throughout the County, and there is an overnight shelter in Ypsilanti. During day-time hours, those seeking overnight shelter should first contact HAWC to obtain a referral for shelter at 734-961-1999.

How do I get into the shelter?
Any individuals or families seeking emergency shelter please contact Housing Access of Washtenaw County (HAWC) at 734-961-1999 to obtain a referral to the Shelter Association of Washtenaw County (individuals), Alpha House (families), & SafeHouse (survivors). If it is after 5pm or weekend, if you're an individual, please come to or call the Delonis Center (734-662- 2829) and we'll assist serving you. Families, please come to or call Alpha House for assistance anytime at 734-822-0220.

What is provided at the shelter?
Individuals are provided a safe place to sleep each night and can access a wide variety of services including meals, case management, medical care, and most importantly help finding permanent housing.

For updates and more information: bit.ly/washtenaw-warming

Parmesan chickpea soup

ELIZABETH BAUMAN
Groundcover contributor

Ingredients:
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ sweet onion, diced
3 garlic cloves, minced
Kosher salt and pepper
Dash of crushed red pepper flakes
1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
1 parmesan rind
4 cups vegetable stock
¾ cup tiny-cut pasta, ditalini
8 ounces fresh spinach
Parmesan cheese, for topping
Lemon wedges, for spritzing

Directions:

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium-low heat. Stir in the onion and garlic with a big pinch of salt and pepper. Cook for 5 minutes, until translucent.

Stir in the crushed red pepper flakes. Add the chickpeas, parmesan rind and stock. Bring the mixture to a boil.

Once boiling, add in your pasta. Cook until the pasta is al dente. Once the pasta is cooked, stir in the spinach. Taste and season with extra salt and pepper.

Top with plenty of parmesan cheese. Ladle into bowls and squeeze a little lemon juice in each bowl.

Happyscopes

FELICIA WILBERT
Groundcover vendor No. 234

Our song: "Happyscopes are here today. Read it laugh and smile all day! Happyscopes are here today!"

Sagittarius: Nov.22 - Dec.-21

You are great at shooting your love, now reel it in and hold on to it. Ring the Christmas bells, shake love and harmony in your life.

Capricorn: Dec.22 - Jan.19

Don't eat or work like a goat the rest of the year. You deserve relaxation time! Let the lights and joyous harmony of music satisfy that urge to work.

Aquarius: Jan.20 - Feb.18

Put the load down just for a moment. Put up those lights, hang joy and prosperity. Let your love and creative side shine, shine, shine!

Pisces: Feb.19 - Mar.20

Yes, that wreath would look good. Hang green and the money will come! Happiness is yours ... accept it.

Aries: Mar.21 - Apr.19

Stop cramming. The holidays are here! Your turn, time to release your decorative energy. The love you give will be given back.

Taurus: Apr.20 - May 20

Hello, let those hands and feet loose. Love has been poking at you! Decorate in your favorite color and embrace the love you desire. Accept the love given. Don't hide, you can hold on to it forever.

Gemini: May 21 - Jun.21

Give a little, save a lot! Twins stand still, take time to cook and enjoy your decorations. We know you are two times the fun and excitement.

Cancer: Jun.22 - Jul.22

Stand up for truth and love; be a good example lighting the way up for others. The truth is light, and life will be in harmony. Hold up the mistletoe and give that kiss.

Leo: Jul.23 - Aug.22

We all know that Peter did not build it! You did, creative one. It'a time for the party to start, don't be shy. Your love maybe staring you in your eye.

Virgo: Aug.23 - Sept.22

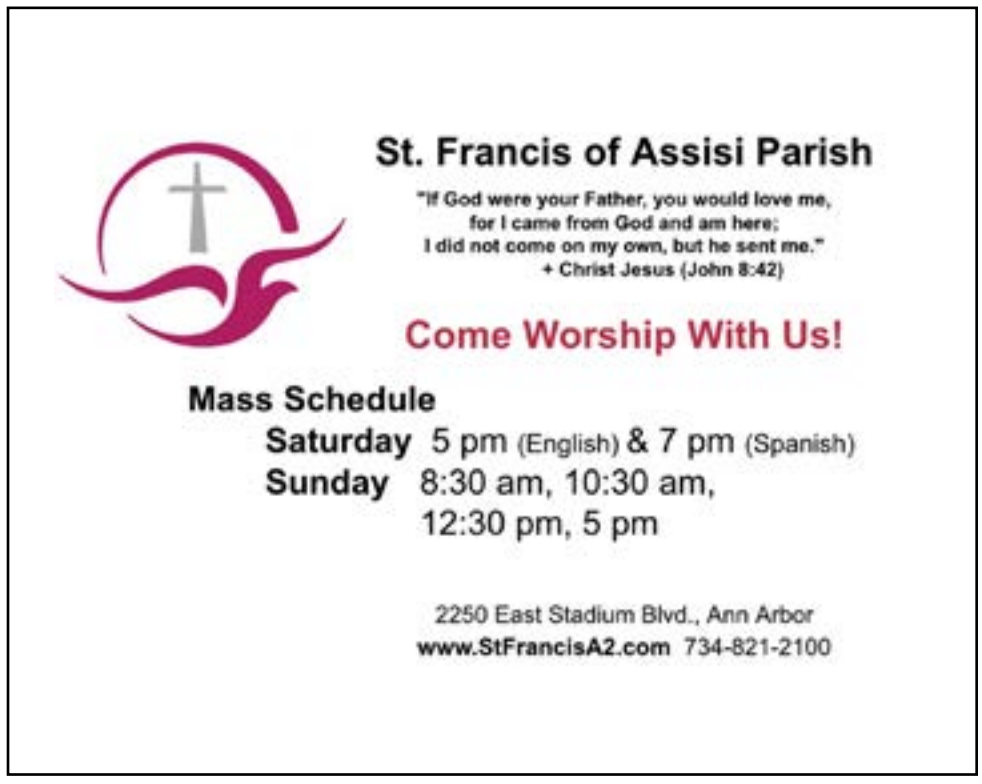
It's your favorite creative season. Now take time to show off some of that work. Love is behind all that work; time waits for no one.

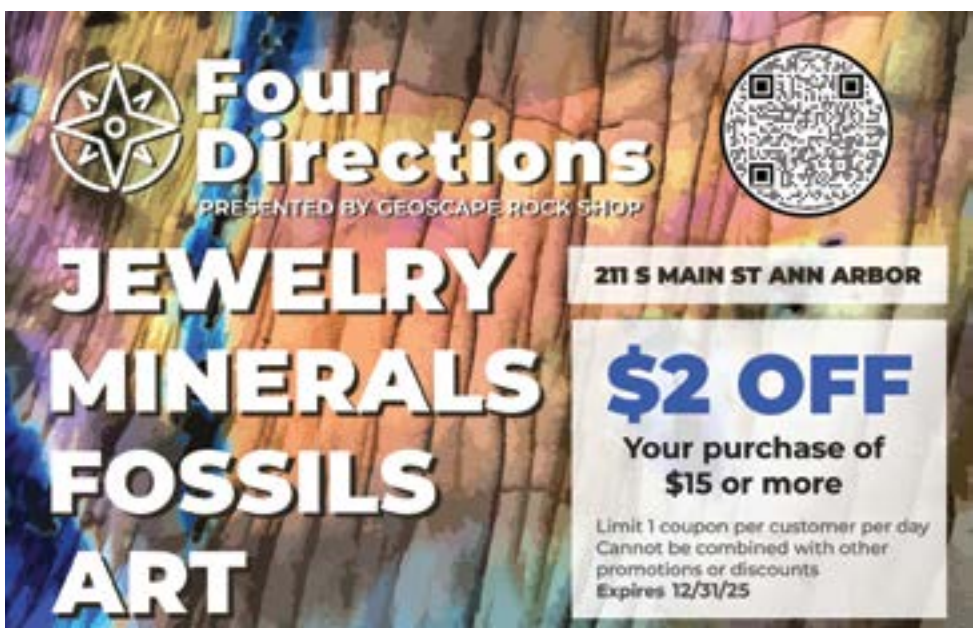
Libra: Sept.23 - Oct.23

You won't be hanging on a string this year. String up those lights, balancing with a pop of color, let the joy glow.

Scorpio: Oct.24 - Nov.21

Put that stinger away, only kisses and hugs are allowed. Reach out giving someone else joy. Joy, peace and harmony will be yours.


St. Francis of Assisi Parish
"If God were your Father, you would love me,
for I came from God and am here;
I did not come on my own, but he sent me."
+ Christ Jesus (John 8:42)
Come Worship With Us!
Mass Schedule
Saturday 5 pm (English) & 7 pm (Spanish)
Sunday 8:30 am, 10:30 am,
12:30 pm, 5 pm
2250 East Stadium Blvd., Ann Arbor
www.StFrancisA2.com 734-821-2100



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